

TO: All Interested Parties
FROM: Hart Research Associates and The Tarrance Group
DATE: April 11, 2018
RE: Key Findings from Statewide Survey on Pre-kindergarten

From March 16 to 18, 2018, Hart Research (D) and The Tarrance Group (R) conducted a statewide telephone survey among registered voters in Alabama* to gauge their opinions about early education and their support for the state to fully fund pre-k.

The overarching takeaway from this survey is that Alabamians widely recognize the importance of pre-k for four-year-olds, strongly favor the state funding pre-k so that all four-year-olds are able to attend, and significantly endorse the idea that improving children’s school readiness ultimately will benefit the K-12 education system overall.

Key findings from this survey are detailed below:

- **Substantial support for education funding generally** — As a contextual point, Alabama voters widely prioritize education funding over freezing taxes and spending. Two in three (65%) voters say that “making sure there is sufficient funding for needs such as education” is a greater priority than “holding the line on state taxes and spending” (23%). That includes approximately six in 10 Republicans and seniors, and two-thirds of evangelicals, non-parents, and rural voters.
- **Overwhelming support for pre-k funding specifically** — Fully 75% of voters say the state should fund voluntary pre-k for all families, just as we do for K-12 education—that includes 66% who *feel strongly* that the state should fund pre-k. By comparison, just 19% say the state should not fund pre-k. This pro-funding sentiment crosses demographic, geographic, and partisan boundaries.

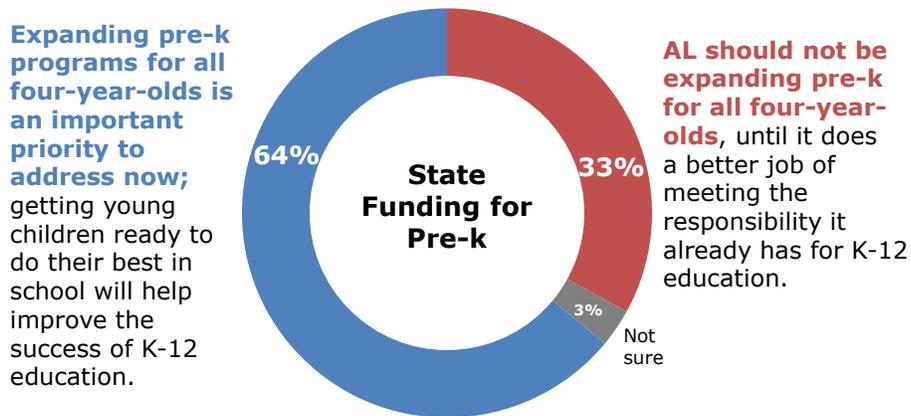
Voters Saying State Should Fully Fund Pre-k			
	%		%
Democrats	93	Urban residents	74
Independents	68	Suburban residents	67
Republicans	66	Small town residents	78
Parents	79	Rural residents	81
Non-parents	74	Evangelicals	77
Age 18-34	76	Non-evangelicals	73
Age 35-49	80	Whites	70
Age 50-64	70	African Americans	93
Age 65+	76	Birmingham media	71
Men	71	Huntsville/Decatur/Florence media	79
Women	79	Mobile/Pensacola media	66
		Montgomery media	83

* A representative sample of 602 voters across the state was interviewed; the overall margin of error is ±4.0 percentage points for the full sample and is higher for subgroups of the sample.

It is worth noting that even a majority of voters who are otherwise disinclined to support increased state spending make an exception in the case of pre-k: 51% of those who say we should hold the line on taxes and spending also favor increasing state funding for pre-k.

- **Belief that expanded pre-k access will help improve K-12** — Voters were asked which of the following statements they agree with more; nearly two-thirds agree that improved school readiness will help improve K-12 education and reject the notion that expanding pre-k funding should take a back seat to K-12 funding:

Which statement comes closer to your point of view?



- **Strong endorsement of the importance of pre-k** — After hearing a description of a high-quality pre-k program, nearly eight in ten voters say that it is very important (62%) or fairly important (16%) for four-year-olds to spend time in such a program before they enter kindergarten. Indeed, majorities of nearly every subgroup within the electorate say that this is *very* important, including 63% of parents and 62% of non-parents.
- **Pre-k is a voting issue** — Near the end of the survey, after hearing a number of reasons both to favor and to oppose expanded pre-k funding, 61% of voters say they would be more likely to support their state legislator if he/she favored expanding pre-k in Alabama. A near equal contingent (59%) say they would be more likely to support a candidate for governor who takes this position. Only 9% in each case say they would be less likely to support someone who takes this position, and about one in four says it makes no difference to them either way. Importantly, these opinions cross partisan lines, with majorities of Republicans, Democrats, and independents more inclined to support a pro-pre-k candidate.

Voters Saying More Likely to Support a Pro-pre-k Lawmaker			
Your State Legislator		A Candidate for Governor	
	%		%
Democrats	81	Democrats	76
Independents	58	Independents	55
Republicans	51	Republicans	53

The Bottom Line: Alabamians obviously place a premium on education and wish to see it funded at a level that can fully meet the needs of the state’s children. The results of this survey make clear that voters view pre-kindergarten as a vital component of a good education. Not only do they view pre-k as important for children, they believe it should be a priority for the state to make pre-k available to all four-year-olds in the state and overwhelmingly support the state allotting the funds necessary to enable this.